

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OTTAWA 04402 250019Z

65

ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8126

LIMITED OFFICAL USE OTTAWA 4402

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT,CA

SUBJ: CONSERVATIVE LEADERSHIP RACE

1. CLAIMING FIRM SUPPORT ALREADY OF 10 TORY MP'S, CLAUDE WANGER (MP ST HYACINTHE QUEBEC) OFFICIALLY BECAME TENTH CONTENDER SUNDAY IN CONSERVATIVE LEADERSHIP RACE. LONG-EXPECTED CAMPAIGN OPENED WITH STRONG LAW-AND-ORDER PITCH, INCLUDING ENDORSEMENT OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT FOR PREMEDITATED MURDER. WAGNER ALSO CALLED FOR MODERATION IN IMPLEMENTING BILINGUALISM IN FEDERAL BUREAUCRACY AND RESTRAINTS ON GOVERNMENT GROWTH AND SPENDING.

2. COMMENT: GIVEN PERSISTENT CLAIMS BY ALBERTA PREMIER PETER LOUGHEED THAT HE DOES NOT WANT TOP TORY SPOT, WAGNER IS STRONG CONTENDER IN RACE. ALTHOUGH RECENT REVELATION OF TRUST FUND BY UNNAMED SUPPORTERS TO SUPPLEMENT HIS PERSONAL INCOME HAS HURT HIM, HE REMAINS POSSIBLY ONLY CANDIDATE WHO COULD BRING CONSERVATIVES MUCH-NEEDED FRENCH QUEBEC VOTES WHILE ALSO SOMEWHAT POPULAR IN WESTERN PROVINCES. COMING WEEKS EXPECTED TO HEAT BATTLE BETWEEN WAGNER AND MONTREAL LAWYER BRIAN MULRONEY FOR SUPPORT OF LARGE (20 PERCENT) QUEBEC DELEGATION TO LEADERSHIP CONVENTION, WITH WINNER, AS A MINIMUM, HAVING STRONG SAY IN CHOICE OF NEXT TORY LEADER.
JOHNSON

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Message Attributes

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